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1. Church relief for Hungary is complicated by Hungarian government regulations strictly controlling private relief agencies. This control reflects the hostility of the Russian military authorities toward church relief work. Foreign church representatives find difficulty in obtaining entry visas. The Russians, it is believed, view the strongly religious peasantry as a stumbling block to Soviet plans for Hungary. Yet neither the Russians nor the Hungarian Government have taken steps to curb religious freedom in Hungary.

2. President Zoltán Tildy of the Hungarian Republic not only rejects the idea that the church owes allegiance to the new regime, but he is convinced that the state owes a definite obligation to the church. The President was an ordained minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church until he entered office. The State seeks to encourage religious bodies, harmed by land reforms which reduced all holdings to less than 1,000 acres each, especially in the support of the important church schools. They constitute sixty percent of all Hungarian educational institutions.

Confessional schools were largely subsidized by generous land endowments. Thus, in losing the land, the church runs the risk of losing the schools. The Government now pays the salaries of all bishops and contributes substantially to the salaries of the clergy. Free churches receive nothing.

The Government will rebuild at state expense one church for each of the three principal confessions. A Catholic church will be erected in Esztergom; a Reformed in Debrecen, and a Lutheran in Budapest. Approval of the Methodist petition to the Government for official recognition as a church is expected soon. All religious groups now possess freedom of worship and instruction.

The Roman Catholics, openly opposed to the Government, complain that their religious processions meet interference. Protestants say the Government opposes Christian youth work, while permitting political parties to recruit freely.

3. The Russians have returned hundreds of buildings belonging to churches which they seized during the war for military purposes. They usually are in deplorable condition. More than 25 railroad carloads of equipment were removed from one deaconess house and hospital. Even the window frames were taken from one church school.

The uncertainty of Russian policy agitates the churches. More than five tons of periodicals and publications were taken from the theological library at Debrecen. Lesser quantities were taken from other faculties. The purge is not yet finished.

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Many examiners are Russian Army officers who are particularly interested in copies of American and British magazines. The name of Lenin or Stalin is said to be grounds enough for confiscation. The material is declared "Fascist". Librarians are unable to predict what literature will so be typed.

Despite this supervision, some Communists retain church membership. One is an elder in a Reformed Church at Budapest. This church is considered reactionary.

4. The Roman Catholic Church, backed by a population almost seventy five percent Catholic, openly opposes the Government. It is led by Cardinal Mindszenty, a popular champion throughout the country who enjoys the support of some Protestants in his condemnation of the old injustices which continue under the new regime.

The Catholic Church is bitter over the loss of millions of acres confiscated under the land reform. But little importance is attached to the fact both the President of Hungary, Zoltán Tildy, and the Prime Minister, Ference Nagy, are Reformed. Protestant-Catholic relations are good.

5. A strong evangelical trend is appearing in all Protestant groups. In the Reformed Church, a left-wing threatens a formal split in the Church, but as no desire exists to form a separate church, both parties are working to prevent the schism.

The radical group, called the "Friends of Evangelization" is led by Pastors Bokely and Albert Bereczky, both well-known church leaders in Hungary and close to the present regime. So close, in fact, that they are accused of making compromises with Communism. But to their critics in the cautious body of their church, they say that if they do not recognize the fact that they are now within the Russian "sphere of influence", they will place the church in jeopardy as "reactionary". Bereczky is a former seminary classmate of President Tildy.

6. Interest in all churches runs high. Prime Minister Nagy is reported to have said that in many villages the peasants rebuilt their churches, schools and parsonages before working on their own homes.

During Reformation Week there were two great mass meetings in Budapest's Music Hall. One included Baptists, Methodists, Salvation Army, Old Catholics and Seven Day Adventists. About 3,000 people crowded the large hall. The leader of the Old Catholics (who number only 600 in Hungary) asked "state" churches to cut the last cords which bind them. The leader of the Adventists declared that religious leadership was to be expected from the West and not from the East. The other meeting was conducted by the Lutheran and Reformed communions, which applauded the attendance of the President of Hungary and its Prime Minister.

7. Russian interference was suspected in an attempt to organize a Catholic group to oppose Cardinal Mindszenty. A report was circulated that the Russians selected the Hungarian Minister to Moscow--an ardent Catholic--for the task. But attempts to form a new church party have been largely unsuccessful.
8. The Russian Orthodox Church approached the small Serb-Orthodox group in Hungary through the Bishop of Munkács (Munkaev) of Ruthenia who belongs to the Uniat Church which recently renounced Rome. (Ruthenia is now a part of the USSR.)

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